

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year ending December 31st, 1901.

HEALTH OFFICE,

TOWN HALL, BIRKDALE,

January, 1902.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE BIRKDALE URBAN
DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report of the health and sanitary condition of your district for the past year (1901), together with the statistics of sickness and mortality on the forms supplied by the Local Government Board.

The health of the district, compared with last year, shows a continued improvement, and much consideration and time has been given to the general improvement of the district. Careful inspection has been made by

your Inspector and myself, and a large number of visits paid by a Sub-Committee of the members of the Health Department to investigate insanitary property. Plans of property have been carefully considered and instructions given that no plans of new property should be passed without careful examination, and an order issued that no dwelling be occupied until same has been certified by the Council as fit for habitation.

The roads of the district have also been much improved, and the comfort of visitors generally has been taken into consideration. Noiselessness and smoothness is an important matter in a health resort, as much bumping and jolting of invalids is prevented. Cleanliness is another matter of no small moment. The roads are so formed as to be easily cleaned as well for sanitary purposes as general comfort. We are fortunate in not having localities usually known as slum districts, for it is in such places that fever usually originates, and it does not always end there. One particular locality, however, to which I have frequently called the attention of your Board, is Swire Road. Your Inspector and myself made frequent visits to this road, and reported to your Committee that there exists a goodly number of pig-styes undrained and unpaved, with all the consequent evils, which is a most serious matter in so limited an area, and which should not be allowed without proper sanitary measures being enforced. I am glad to know that the Health Committee has given instructions that they must be properly drained and paved and arrangements made for at least a weekly removal of all manure, but as this has been in abeyance for some time, I hope the Committee will see that this order is enforced. Consumption still claims too many victims, and—as mentioned in last year's Report—strict measures of cleanliness are insisted upon, and all known infected houses are now disinfected. All consumptives are dangerous both to themselves and others unless they deal with their expectorations in such a manner as to prevent the contamination of the atmosphere. Experiments show that in houses occupied by a certain class of consumptives there is a very dangerous accumulation of infective material, and that this infective material is present equally in the dirty houses and in those in which the conditions as regards ordinary cleanliness are above reproach.

CANCER.

Previously the Local Government Board included deaths from this disease under the heading of General Diseases, but the new Forms now

issued give a special column for deaths registered from Cancer, which shows a large increase in death rate from this particular disease. Medical scientists are now giving the matter their earnest consideration, and it seems likely from some recent discoveries that we may in the near future be in possession of a reliable cure for this distressing complaint.

Steady supervision has revealed many insanitary conditions, which have been immediately remedied. Fourteen drains and soil pipe ventilators which were found sealed, chiefly with rust, were cleaned out. Eleven defective ashpits have been abolished and dust bins substituted. The ash bin system which was recently adopted is being willingly taken up by tenants and owners, which will much assist the removal of house refuse.

TABLE I.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births.		Deaths under 1 year of age.		Deaths at all ages.		Deaths in Public Institutions.	Deaths of Non-residents registered in District.	Deaths of Residents beyond District.	Deaths at all ages. Net.	
		Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered.	Number.	Rate.				Number.	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1891	12,500	288	23.0	46	159	209	16.7					
1892	"	325	26.0	45	138	192	15.3					
1893	13,000	309	23.7	59	190	229	17.6					
1894	"	302	23.2	30	99	167	12.8					
1895	"	338	26.0	51	150	215	16.5					
1896	14,000	333	23.7	34	102	168	12.0					
1897	"	313	22.3	57	182	212	15.1					
1898	15,000	333	22.2	47	141	190	12.6					
1899	"	308	25.3	50	162	231	15.4					
1900	"	334	22.2	42	125	215	14.3					
Averages for years 1891-1900		3183	237.6 23.7	461		2028	148.3 14.8		Resident less than 1 year 18			
1901	14,197	319	22.4	46	144	184	12.9			15	199	14.0

Area of District in acres }
(exclusive of area } 2214
covered by water).

Total population at all ages 14,197 }
Number of Inhabited houses 2898 } At Census
Average No. of persons per house 4.89 } of 1901.

SMALL-POX.

Fortunately we keep clear of this disease, which is now prevalent in many neighbouring towns, but the Council have made arrangements to meet any emergency, and zealous watch is kept over all visitors from suspected quarters.

SCARLET FEVER.

Twenty-eight cases of this disease were notified. All cases were of a very mild type and no deaths occurred. I think it is due to the mild character of this disease that isolated cases are constantly cropping up. The parents usually attribute the early symptoms to common colds; the children are permitted to attend school and mix with other scholars, and it is not until the rash appears that the true nature of the disease is discovered and isolation and sanitary conditions enforced.

WHOOPIING COUGH

Was also prevalent during a portion of the year and caused five deaths. This disease is not seriously considered by parents, the early symptoms being generally attributed to ordinary cough, consequently few precautions are taken or medical advice sought until the disease assumes an epidemic character.

MEASLES.

An epidemic of Measles appeared during the latter portion of the year. This, like the former disease, is not a notifiable one, consequently a large number of cases occurred before coming under notice. But the school teachers kindly gave a weekly return of all absentees, and we were able to stamp out the complaint by calling regularly on the infected houses and giving strict orders that the children should be isolated and not allowed to return to school without permission either from myself or the medical practitioner in attendance. In this way we successfully cleared the disease without closing the schools. There was only one death registered.

ENTERIC FEVER.

Seven cases have been reported, five being rather of a mild type. The two most serious cases were undoubtedly brought from outside the district, and I regret to say one case proved fatal. The usual sanitary enquiries were made in each case, and no serious sanitary defects were detected. Disinfectants, where needed, were gratuitously distributed. The houses were all supplied with town's water, and the milk supply was also above suspicion.

DIPHTHERIA.

Unfortunately there was an unusual number of cases reported during the year, and four deaths were registered. Much time and attention was given by the Inspector and myself to try and discover the cause of outbreak, and as no insanitary conditions were noticed it must only be concluded that the most potent factor in the spread of the disease was the attendance of children at school who had been in contact with some one suffering from the disease. Every house was visited several times and instructions given to boil all milk and to use only town's water. Disinfectants were supplied with instructions to freely flush all closets and sewers. The schools were also visited, and teachers advised to send all scholars home suffering from sore throat however slight, and not to permit any child to return to work without proper medical certificate. The responsible teachers very willingly assisted our efforts and carried out our instructions in detail. Arrangements have now been made by your Council whereby all suspected cases of either Typhoid Fever or Diphtheria can be submitted to Bacterial Analysis. This I hope will give us early information as to the prevalence of disease.

DIARRHŒA.

Five deaths were registered from epidemic Diarrhœa. The same stringent precautions were taken as have already been described under the heading of Typhoid Fever and Diphtheria.

TABLE III.—Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1901.

Notifiable Disease.	Cases notified in whole district.										No. of Cases removed to Hospital.						
	At all ages.	At ages—years.						65 and upwards.									
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards.		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.		
Small-pox																	
Cholera																	
Diphtheria	17	6	8	3													
Membranous Croup ...	1	1															
Erysipelas	8				6	2											
Scarlet Fever	28	14	12	2													
Typhus Fever																	
Enteric Fever	7		1	2	4												
Relapsing Fever																	
Continued Fever																	
Puerperal Fever	1				1												
Plague																	
Totals.....	62	Nil	21	21	7	11	2						12 from whole of district.				

SCAVENGING.

As usual the roads have been kept clean under the direction of your Council. Ashpits have had frequent attention, and, as before mentioned, the Bin System where adopted is working well.

LIGHTING.

During the year a considerable improvement has been made in the district. Many ordinary street lamps have been converted into Incandescent Lamps; and in the near future the Electric Light will be installed in the district.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES

Are visited regularly and inspected. One beast sent to be killed for food was siezed and boiled down for dogs' meat. A repetition of this is not likely to occur with the strict supervision that is given to this matter, not only by the Inspector, but also by the owner of the property.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, ETC.

These receive careful attention from your Veterinary Inspector, who makes a monthly return to the Health Committee on the subject.

SEWAGE SYSTEM.

Much good work has been accomplished in this department. We still continue to convert the old Privies into the Water Closet System. The greatest activity has been shown in respect of drainage and works for disposal of sewage. One half of the Filtration Area—eleven acres—has been redrained, and the general nature of the land improved for filtration purposes. The Sewers have also been thoroughly cleansed; and I am pleased to notice that the Council have secured a Flushing Tank of large capacity as recommended by me in my last Report, which will more effectually cleanse the sewers. The poles for overhead equipment for electric traction, too, are being used as much as possible for ventilating the sewers.

The rate of Mortality was most favourable, and less than the previous year. The Zymotic Death Rate was slightly higher owing to unusual prevalence of Measles and Whooping Cough. The deaths of Infants under one year gave the proportion of 144 per 1000 births registered. Zymotic Death Rate, including Diarrhœa, 1·1.

BIRTHS.		DEATHS.	
Males.....	150	Males.....	84
Females	169	Females.....	100
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	319		184
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Birth Rate ...22·4		Death Rate... 13·0	

Ages at which Death took place :—

Under 1 year	46
1 and under 5 years	18
5 ,, 15 ,, 	2
15 ,, 25 ,, 	7
25 ,, 65 ,, 	54
65 and upwards	57
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	184
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Your Obedient Servant,

ALBERT V. WHEELER,

Medical Officer of Health.

HEALTH OFFICE,

TOWN HALL, BIRKDALE,

January, 1902.

*LIST OF NUISANCES ABATED from January 1st, 1901,
to December 31st, 1901.*

NUISANCE ARISING FROM	No.	REMARKS.
Drains stopped.....	36	Drains cleaned out
Dirty rain-water cisterns	11	Cisterns cleaned out
Boiler chimney excessive smoking	3	Nuisances abated
Defective drains	23	Trapped with modern gullies
Defective sinkstones	10	Sinkstones re-laid and renewed
Defective waste water pipes	15	Undertrapped
Slop water closets stopped.....	16	Closets cleaned out
Premises without proper water supply	4	Town's water put into dwellings
Dead horse on premises.....	1	Removed and buried
Offensive slop water closets	3	Modern washdown w.c.'s fixed
Offensive washout water closets	6	Modern washdown w.c.'s fixed
Premises re-drained	2	Drains re-laid & proper fall given
Drain and soil pipe ventilators } stopped up from various } causes	14	{ Drain and soil pipe ventilators cleaned out
Offensive pan closets	7	Modern washdown w.c.'s fixed
Defective drains, not being } ventilated, and no fresh air } inlets provided	19	{ Drains intercepted from main sewer and ventilated with F. A. I.
Offensive privies	23	{ Modern water closets with flushing arrangements fixed
Defective roofs of dwelling, } letting in rain-water	8	Roofs repaired
Town's water turned off at } dwellings.....	33	Town's water turned on again
Diseased carcase of beef intended } for food of man	1	Boiled down for dog meat
Defective ashpits	11	{ Ashpits abolished ; ashbins now in use
Keeping animals too near } dwellings.....	2	Animals removed off the premises
Smoke observations taken	5	{ Fireman cautioned ; no further complaint
Trough water closets stopped ...	2	Closets cleaned out
TOTAL.....	255	

54 Official Notices were served during the year for the abatement of Nuisances.

201 Nuisances abated during the year on intimation being given to the various owners on the discovery of said Nuisances.

No legal proceedings required to be taken during the year for the abatement of Nuisances.

In October last the Council adopted the Ashbin principle in place of Ashpits, whereby house refuse is removed weekly, it being optional with the ratepayers as to taking up the said principle. 81 Ashbins have been brought into use by various householders, with eleven others on order waiting slight alterations being made to receive same. This mode of collecting house refuse is being taken advantage of by builders erecting new property in the district.

The emptying and disinfecting of Ashpits has been carried out systematically throughout the district during the year by the Council's own workmen, the refuse being carted to land farmed outside the district.

Nuisances under Notice at the end of year, but not yet completed :—

Insufficient Privy Accommodation.....	2
Offensive Pan Closets	2
Nuisances arising from the keeping of Pigs	7
Defective Soil Pipes	2
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TOTAL.....	13
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JAMES JUMP,
Sanitary Inspector.

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